H U M A N R E L A T I O N S
a n d
N A V A L L E A D E R S H I P

By

COMMANDER ALVIN ROBINSON, U. S. NAVY

For

THE POST-GRADUATE COURSE IN COMPTROLLERSHIP

SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

JANUARY, 1953.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

INTRODUCTION 1

Chapter

I. DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RELATIONS 2

II. INDUSTRY'S CONCEPT OF HUMAN RELATIONS . . 6

III. NAVAL LEADERSHIP 11

IV. RECONCILIATION 17

BIBLIOGRAPHY 20

I N T R O D U C T I O N

It has always been the belief of the Navy that the qualities necessary in leadership are present in the average good man, and that he can be made a good leader if his native qualities are properly developed. This belief is not confined to the naval service. In industry, politics and athletics, one sees thousands of examples where individuals have accomplished extraordinary deeds by means of their leadership- not born leaders but by those with enough character to develop the art of leadership.

There has been a deluge of books and articles setting forth doctrine on the subject. In the last few years there has been expressed concern that the present day stress on the human relation concept of leadership (their definition is "yearning-over-the-group") has obscured the original concept of a naval leader- the impersonal professional who led by example.

It is the attempt of this paper to indicate that little in the teaching of modern psychology and sociology contradicts the lessons in leadership taught and practiced in the naval service.

C H A P T E R I

DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RELATIONS

In the early 1920s, U. S. industrial administration woke up to the fact that high production was not the product of mechanics, gadgets, work measurement studies and other stimuli to efficiency which produced profits- the then accepted primary goal and duty of business management.

Inspired by the work of Frederick Taylor, Henry Gantt, Frank Gilbreth and other advocates of so-called "scientific management", industry had been focusing their attention on the mechanical and technical aspects of their organizations, and forgotten that industry is carried on by men and women. Corporations had grown to such size that employers lost all sense of contact with their workers, and overlooked the fact that there was an organization of human beings producing the product and not an assembly of mere parts of a mass production machine; that these groups of people came from various nationalities, walks of life and different social stratas, each with their own needs and ambitions, each making their own individual adjustment from being their own boss to being a cog in a great impersonal mechanism.

The basic American sentiment that people do not like

to be pushed around and the human tendency to resist any change that affects their pattern of behaviour and robs them of their self respect, created wide spread resistance to the speed-up system. The philosophy of strong-hand bossing and abuses that accompanied it pointed up the difference between productive efficiency and the popular concept of democracy. The investigations of Elton Mayo (a Harvard sociologist who died in 1949 and is honored with fathering the industrial human relation movement) disclosed that low production, despite the presence of all the latest efficiency wrinkles and incentives, was caused by the unhappiness of the worker. They wanted to be lifted out of their automaton state, their dignity returned and their individual worth recognized.

Public sentiment, together with a new concept of management-labor relations that was based on mutual understanding, and community pressure for businesses to recognize their social responsibilities, brought about a slow realization that the former concept of management- to pay workers reasonable salaries and work them a reasonable number of hours and the human problem will solve itself- was an archaic one and actually a deterrent to increased production. High production could be achieved when well trained people worked together under suitable conditions and under leadership that sincerely evidences an interest in them as human beings.

It was difficult for enlightened administrators to

sell this new concept. High pressured emphasis on production goals had been so ingrained that it was inconceivable that any sound thinking business man could use a humanitarian approach and hope to meet competition. However, it gradually became accepted among business leaders that the successful executive, from top down to foreman and supervisor, depended primarily on his ability to handle men. But, training programs to develop the proper understanding of human nature were not installed. The managers' own resistance to any change, his unwillingness to yield space to any other man, his vanity and urge to still throw his weight around, made it a slow progress. He acted as an opportunist, dealing with similar cases in different ways on different days, depending on how he felt at the moment. Each manager was convinced that he was a master in the field of human relations. Though the executives often could see that others were unwise and unfair in their dealings with people, he was always convinced that in his own relations with his employees his judgments were sound and generous. This was a very natural attitude as everyone thinks he is a good judge of people, an amateur psychologist always ready to offer advice on problems involving human relations.

Top U. S. industrial corporations led by sponsored university projects recognized that there were unchanging and everlasting laws which govern human behaviour and motivation. The discovery that the same care and research in the solution

of human problems as had been given to the solution of production problems would be rewarded in productivity, led to extraordinary progress in research and application in the field of human relations.

Clarence Francis, Chairman of General Foods, at a post-war convention of the National Association of Manufacturers, had this to say:

> You can buy a man's time, you can buy a man's physical presence at a given place; you can even buy a measured number of skilled muscular motions per hour or day. But you cannot buy enthusiasm; you cannot buy initiative; you cannot buy loyalty; you cannot buy the devotion of hearts, minds and souls. You have to earn these things...It is ironic that Americans- the most advanced people technically, mechanically and industrially- should have waited until a comparatively recent period to inquire into the most promising single source of productivity: namely, the human will to work. It is hopeful, on the other hand, that the search is now under way.

There still exists, however, a small minority that feel that too much stress is being placed on human relations. As expressed by Dr. Lillian Gilbreth, at an address on scientific management, in Washington, D.C., December 3, 1951:

> There are waves of these things. Sometimes the emphasis is all on the technical side, at other times it is on the human side. At present we are going thru a wave of human relations. The idea is prevalent that if we let the technical standards slack so much, by some means or other we will be rewarded with a great improvement in human relations, and from that an improvement in over-all production. That wont happen. It can't happen. No matter how we develop the human engineering side, we must not lower the technical standards.

C H A P T E R II

INDUSTRYS' CONCEPT OF HUMAN RELATIONS

As indicated in the preceding chapter, a new concept of the function of leadership in industry was crystallized. It was based on many studies of the attitude of the workers towards their jobs. Primarily the working man wanted security, fair compensation, provisions for advancement, good working conditions and reasonable hours, an apportunity to express his opinions and participation in decisions which were of importance to him, provisions for sickness, accident, death and old age, and a pride in company policies which would make him feel that he was teamed up in an important endeavor to which he has a significant contribution to make.

This demand for new managerial leadership meant a new attitude with respect to human relations and its effect on productivity. There developed a deep respect for the individual and the contribution he could make to the achievement of the goal. It meant building the kind of team work that would release the constructive energies of the entire organization into a common channel.

Some writers claim that human relations is far

from being a science and is nothing more than applied common sense; others, that it is like an art that cannot be taught as a mathematical formula or a mechanical process. It is still necessary, however, to develop techniques which will give to all employees at all levels of the organization a greater sense of belonging, a maintenance of their personal sense of dignity, a recognition of their work as an individual and a pride in being respected members of the industrial community.

Actually, the entire basis for good human relationships is the establishment of a common ground of mutual understanding. In the last analysis, it is merely the practical application of psychology, or in simpler terms, the science of understanding human nature. Human nature is composed of a number of instints or drives which very largely motivate and govern the actions of most men. An appreciation of these fundamental compulsions will lead the way to a common understanding.

Let us briefly define some needs that have been mentioned previously:

First, there is man's sense of dignity; the conviction that he has basic human rights that others must respect; the need for recognition that he is a contributor to the common good.

Second, there is a need for the esteem of others; the seeking of approval that he is an important and necessary

part of the organization- his self respect.

Third, the instinct for survival; the need for reasonable economic stability with an opportunity for improving his standard of living.

Fourth, the need for security; the assurance that his needs for tomorrow and the future are secure.

Fifth, the need for social status; a strong identification with a group that has mutual interests.

With this psychological understanding, industry realized that it was not meeting its obligations. Management was not achieving the kind of industrial society that led to high productivity by merely meeting the desire for survival, i.e., keeping the employee content with wages that will feed, clothe and house him adequately. It was necessary to build up and maintain morale.

Most of us are aware of the strides that have taken place in national industrys' awakening to their problem, so herein will be briefly indicated only the outstanding changes that developed and are now considered standards by responsible executives.

Sound personnel policies, starting with job analysis and following up with a sympathetic training and educational program correlated with industrial counselling, were introduced. Studies of how work could be made easier by changes in lighting, work simplification, rest periods and decent hygienic conditions

were instituted and their results incorporated in the employment schedule. From the first line supervisor up through the entire hierarchy of management men were instructed and trained on how to get along with people; the desirability of not taking yourself seriously, the use of the kind word, making newcomers feel at home, listening fully to grievances with an open mind, giving credit where credit is due and not rebuking or correcting in public.

During the period of transition in which the above techniques were introduced, it was noted that where friction continued to exist, it was the fault of communications. Management was not getting across, was failing to make its intentions and motives clear to its workers. The old fashioned method of a one-way channel of communication following the line of authority or chain of command was ineffective and a deterrent to the new concept of team work and coordination. For members of a group to correlate their own activities with those of others, either on the same level, above or below, they had to have accurste and complete information about company policies and problems and the jobs of others. A two way method of communication in which there was free discussion, an opportunity to be heard and to be consulted on policies labor was to put in execution, became one of the strongest forte of the new relationship between management and labor.

Some of the devices accepted and used are the issuance

of company magazines, periodical reports on work progress and income and profit, suggestion boxes, questionairres, personal interviews to determine employee attitudes and the assigning of a top level supervisor to the job of keeping communications sincere, simple and consistent.

There is no gainsaying the benefits industry derives from the understanding that increased welfare and morale of their working force produces greater efficiency. There is no reason why the basic behaviour of naval personnel should differ from the behaviour of the civilian population. The conclusions and techniques which have been arrived at and put into practice by industrial leaders should be applicable to naval leadership, with the right kind of modification dictated by the difference in motivation and objectives of the naval service.

C H A P T E R III

NAVAL LEADERSHIP

Naval leadership has been defined as the art of imposing one's will upon others in such a manner as to command their obedience, their confidence, their respect and their loyal cooperation. This poses a problem to the naval leader as contrasted with the leader in industry which is inherent in the difference between the mission of the Navy and the objectives of business. The ultimate goal of everything the naval leader says or does is victory in combat, and to accomplish this, the naval officer has to inspire his followers with a devotion that before entering the service men had only acquired through a limited degree. The most the leader in industry asks of his employees may be a small pay reduction, or, a little overtime effort, or the postponement of an annual vacation until a sudden production rush is over. The most the naval leader asks of his men may be their lives. Thus it is of the utmost importance that the naval leader develop self respect and self confidence in his men and to convince them that they can do anything and that they are the equals of anybody. This theory of leadership virtually presupposes an intimate

knowledge of human relations.

The Navy has always realized that despite the necessary trend towards specialization dictated by scientific and electronical advances that "men fight, not ships". The psychologists have pointed the way and the naval officer today knows there is more to the job than just teaching the art of war, that there is an understanding that comes from contact and a sincere sympathy with his men.

Of all the people in the modern industrial system, the naval leader has more insight into the minds of men than any other class. He is the best practical psychologist in existence, even though he does not regard man as a conglomeration of reflexes and conditional responses. He knows him for what he is, an integrated personality with a great capacity for self sacrifice and an irritating habit of doing roisterous, thoughtless things at inopportune times; with all the weaknesses of other humans; that he'll take a drink or several of them and on special occasions get more or less politely drunk. The naval officer sees man in the round and knows him in the raw, and does not think he is such a bad product, or that he is damned by original sin and the victim of circumstances. He may not be a great social thinker but the naval leader knows what the common man wants and realizes when social and economic evils press hard on man and make him restive and ready to kick the traces.

No other leader, with the exception of the sister services, in our modern civilization thinks of men as the naval leader does. To all others, men are producers, consumers, clients, sales prospects, employees or what not, and seldom if ever does any other person deal with more than one facet of man at a time. The naval leader deals with all the sides of man. He feeds, clothes, amuses, shelters, disciplines, doctors, works and arouses self respect, faith, loyalty and patriotism. The leader teaches self reliance, courage and even sex where home and school have neglected the fundamentals. He therefore knows men individually or in the mass as no other group in modern life does.

Recognizing his primary objective and with his deep understanding of man, the naval leader assumes his responsibility of providing those circumstances which will stimulate action toward the will to accomplish- another definition of motivation. The physical factors of good equipment, feeding, housing and medical care are readily understood. The other psychological factors, the five needs of man mentioned previously, are also involved and provided for.

Man's dignity has always been recognized in the Navy. In 1918, Vice-Admiral Sims, U.S.N., said:

> Never destroy or decrease a man's self respect by humiliating him before others. If his self respect is destroyed, his usefulness will be seriously diminished. A man who is called down in the presence of others can hardly help resenting it.

The need of recognition, the pat on the back for a job well done, is part of the indoctrination of every naval officer, including the petty officers. Stress is placed on the value of praise, used to the maximum extent possible, so that subordinates gain a feeling of importance and feel that the jobs they are doing are important. Emphasis is laid in every course of naval leadership on the three basic factors necessary if a man is to acquire a sense of recognition, namely, importance in his own eyes as well as those of his associates and his superiors.

The navy man's security is assured by his knowledge that as long as he abides by the rules and regulations, takes advantage of the many opportunities offered for further education and advancement, he will maintain his rate and position. This takes care of his financial assurance. Any mental insecurity caused by inconsistent disciplinary action, which leaves a man unsure as to how far he can go, is being resolved by the new concept of the use of discipline by the naval leader.

Discipline is defined as control gained by enforcing obedience. There is the stern type of discipline which is based upon fear of the consequences of violation, and there is the academic type which is based upon treatment suited to a disciple or a learner. Previously, the rule of fear was the predominant philosophy because it was the quickest and easiest way to keep men in line and to dispose of offenders. Today,

discipline is based on a combination of the two, that the individual must be trained to perform his duties efficiently and willingly, but he must be chastised if he fails in his performance. The power to punish is still a necessary attribute of command but is now reserved for the incorrigible, for those who shun their duty and for those who do not wish to be amenable to discipline.

A survey conducted by the Bureau of Naval Personnel of the opinions of men leaving the Navy shortly after the last conflict revealed that a surprisingly large number felt a sense of insecurity. A feeling that the officers were not aware of the individual man's potentialities and capabilities, and that an inadequate use was made of their skills and training, was the prevalent criticism. Today there is continuous, excellent and detailed lines of communication from the top down. There is a thorough dissemination of information not only on how to make the next rate but what the future holds for the Navy and the individual. Unnecessary transfers are being held to a minimum and operating schedules are fixed far enough in advance to allow men to adjust their personal plans without inconvenience. Career guidance and personnel evaluation centers have been instituted in order to stabilize promotion and advancement. The aim of all these corrective policies has been to assure every person in the Navy that his progress, training, career and performance of duty are of

direct concern to his leader.

The success of the Navy, as well as any other organization, is built upon the foundation of leadership. To quote from a letter from John Paul Jones to the Naval Committee of Congress, 14 September 1775:

> It is, by no means, enough that an officer of the Navy should be a capable mariner. He must be that, of course, but also a <u>great deal more</u>.

The Navy's interpretation of the underlined phrase in the above quotation is leadership. The kind of a leader the Navy is training is one who impresses and dominates because of his character and his ability to mold and control the minds of men through his understanding of their needs.

Leadership, or command, is the art of dealing with humanity, i.e., the recognition and use of the techniques of human relations. For a remarkably long and brilliant period, naval leadership compiled an enviable record of accomplishment, free from incidents and disorders. One of the reasons was that all naval officers appreciated that their most important duty was the handling of men. This was recognized long before psychology acquired its present significance, and the good officer exemplified daily the principles of human relations even though the professional terminology was unfamiliar to him. Today, science has provided the naval leader tools he can use to supplement the practices developed in the past.

C H A P T E R IV

RECONCILIATION

There is no inconsistency between industrys' concept of human relations and the practice and teaching of naval leadership. There was a time when the leaders of industry, and not a few military and naval officials, subscribed to the belief that there was no connection between the techniques of business and the administration of a military organization. This trend was caused by the fallacious thinking on the part of business that the military man was only an American civilian in uniform, and therefore all military organizations could best be run according to the principles of business management. Now, however, it is generally accepted that not only is there a connection, but that it is in the best interests of both to promote cordial relations and to frequently exchange ideas. In this manner the progress of the one may be accelerated by the adoption of techniques and practices which have proved beneficial to the other.

One of the major fields of new developments that can be adopted is in the area of human relations. Industry has used the findings of modern psychology and studies of human behaviour to great advantage, primarily because of the

impersonal relationship that grew up between supervisory personnel and the worker, due to the increasing variety of tasks and skills demanded by scientific advancement. The modern Navy requires a wider variety of abilities and talents than will be found in any one industry. Therefore, the knowledge and use of civilian personnel techniques is of great significance to the naval officer.

That the Navy is cooperating is evidenced by the setting up in 1946, under the Office of Naval Research, a Human Relations Advisory Panel. This panel engaged investigators in basic research in an attempt to produce workable solutions to problems of human relations and behaviourism, and inter-group behaviour. Some of the Navy financed studies were undertaken in such places as the Prudential Life Insurance Company, the Chesapeake & Ohio Railroad and the Edison Company of Detroit. The results of these studies have been adopted by industrial management. While the emphasis of past studies has been placed on group behaviourism, the human relations factor has not been neglected. A study is now under way by the Research and Development Board on "Human Behaviour Under Conditions of Military Service", with the objective of shaping up the problem and recommending further fields of study.

While there is only a limited understanding of the benefits that can accrue to naval leadership through the application of the results of social science research, the

word is getting around the fleet that human relations is an integral part of command. There is a fast realization that too often and too long the human factor has been allowed to shift for itself due to concentration on logistics, strategy and tactics and training. There is no more excuse in the Navy for ignorance concerning the proficiency, morale, needs and general quality of the men commanded than there is lack of knowledge of the availability of fuel, food, weapons and other logistic support. The prior tendency among officers to become so absorbed in masses of paper work and conferences as to be indifferent to the personal problems, accomplishments, conduct and capabilities of their men, leaving this job to the Chaplain or orientation specialists, is disappearing. The job of perfecting human relations is now placed in the hands of those leaders whom men know well, have frequent contact with and in whom they place their confidence.

A correlation of all the qualities desired in every naval officer by writers and textbooks on naval leadership, in addition to professional background, are:

1. A strong belief in human rights
2. Respect for the dignity of every other person
3. The Golden Rule attitude towards ones' daily associates
4. An abiding interest in all aspects of human welfare.

It is the writer's belief that there has been no undue emphasis on human relations in the Navy- it has always been present.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Books

Gardner, B. H., and Moore, D. C. Human Relations in Industry. Chicago: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1950.

Greene, Col. J. I. (ed). The Infantry Journal Reader. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1943.

Guetzkow, H. (ed). Groups, Leadership and Men. Pittsburgh: Carnegie Press, 1951.

Hoslett, S. D. Human Factors in Management. New York: Harper and Bros., 1946.

Lepawsky, A. Administration. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949.

Stradling, A. H. The Brass Hat. Aldershot, England: Gale and Polden, 1951.

Public Documents

U.S.N. Bureau of Personnel. Human Behaviour and Leadership. Washington: Government Printing Office, 1949.

U.S. Naval Institute. Naval Leadership. Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute, 1949.

Reports

Human Relations in Modern Business. A guide for action. New York: Prentice-Hall, 1949.

Articles

Human Relations. Time Magazine, April 14, 1952.

Harlow, Cdr. A. M., U.S.N.R. A New Look at Naval Leadership. Annapolis, Md.: U.S. Naval Institute, 1950.